

MAG Celebrates 35 Years of Accomplishments

The Maricopa Association of Governments turned 35 years old April 12, marking three-and-a-half decades of regional accomplishments that include bringing 9-1-1 service to the Valley, coordinating regional efforts to address homelessness, and creating the plan for the regional freeway system that will soon be completed.

MAG was formed in 1967, when elected officials recognized the need for long-range planning and policy development on a regional scale.

"The leaders of the Valley's local governments realized that many issues such as transportation and air quality affected residents beyond the borders of their individual jurisdictions," says MAG Executive Director James M. Bourey. "They recognized that by uniting they could solve common problems, take an active role in regional issues, and proactively address concerns that affect all communities."

MAG is charged with developing regional policies and plans in such areas as transportation, air quality, water quality, solid waste and human services. In addition, through an Executive Order from the Governor, MAG develops population estimates and projections for the region. MAG's membership includes the 24 incorporated cities and towns within Maricopa County, the Gila River Indian Community, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, and Maricopa County.

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THEN

Growth has played a major role in 35 years of regional planning. These photos show how the same area of the Pima and Superstition freeways has changed in just three decades.

NOW



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Voices from the Council

"Voices from the Council" is designed to highlight thoughts, ideas and comments from MAG Regional Council members.



Chandler Mayor
Jay Tibshraeny

"Looking back on my time with the Regional Council, I would just like to say it has been a pleasure to serve the people of this region alongside a group of such dedicated and professional leaders. The partnerships that Chandler has developed with the mayors of MAG have been tremendously productive and a true service to the residents of the Valley."

— Chandler Mayor Jay Tibshraeny, who will be leaving office due to term limits after serving eight years as mayor.



Avondale Mayor
Ron Drake

"Whatever governance structure is ultimately adopted by the Council, it should definitely keep a geographical equity within the Valley to allow MAG to keep its regional scope."

— Avondale Mayor Ron Drake, in supporting geographic balance in any restructuring of MAG committees.

"This is really important to a fast-growing city, to be able to sit at the table and add input."

— Goodyear Mayor Bill Arnold, also supporting balance in any restructuring of MAG committees.



Goodyear Mayor
Bill Arnold

"The City is finishing an update to our local transportation plan, which has identified \$2.87 billion in needs over 25 years for a variety of transportation improvements. Existing revenue sources are estimated to provide about \$1.5 billion in funds for these improvements."


If an extension of the county-wide, half-cent sales tax for transportation is proposed, we would anticipate that some of the needs identified in our local plan (such as street

maintenance, bus and rail) would also be included in the regional plan that is being developed.



Mesa Mayor Keno
Hawker

Given this overlap in local and regional transportation planning, can MAG assist the City in estimating regional funding that might be available in the future for projects that are likely to be in both regional and local transportation plans?"

— Mesa Mayor Keno Hawker, in questioning how any future sales tax for transportation may be returned to cities. 

REGIONAL council members

- ◆ Mayor Skip Rimsza Phoenix, Chair
- ◆ Mayor John Keegan Peoria, Vice-Chair
- ◆ Mayor Jay Tibshraeny Chandler, Treasurer
- Mayor Ron Drake Avondale
- Mayor Dusty Hull Buckeye
- Mayor Edward C. Morgan Carefree
- Vice Mayor Ralph Mozilo Cave Creek
- Mayor Jose "Roy" Delgado El Mirage
- Mayor Sharon Morgan Fountain Hills
- Mayor Chuck Turner Gila Bend
- Governor Donald Antone Gila River Indian Community
- Mayor Steve Berman Gilbert
- Mayor Elaine M. Scruggs Glendale
- ◆ Mayor William Arnold Goodyear
- Mayor Margarita Cota Guadalupe
- Mayor J. Woodfin Thomas Litchfield Park
- Supervisor Don Stapley Maricopa County
- ◆ Mayor Keno Hawker Mesa
- Mayor Edward F. Lowry Paradise Valley
- Mayor Wendy Feldman-Kerr Queen Creek
- President Ivan Makil Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
- Mayor Mary Manross Scottsdale
- Mayor Joan Shafer Surprise
- Mayor Neil G. Giuliano Tempe
- Mayor Adolfo Gamez Tolleson
- Mayor Lon McDermott Wickenburg
- Mayor Daphne Green Youngtown
- Dallas Gant and Joe Lane Arizona Department of Transportation
- F. Rockne Arnett Citizens Transportation Oversight Committee
- ◆ Executive Committee Members



MAGAZine is a quarterly newsletter of the Maricopa Association of Governments. It focuses on the issues and concerns of the cities, towns and tribal communities of Maricopa County. If you know of a friend or colleague who would like to receive MAGAZine, please call the MAG office, (602) 254-6300.

Skip Rimsza
Mayor of Phoenix
Regional Council Chair

James M. Bourey
Executive Director

Kelly Taft
Editor

Gordon Tyus
Graphic Design



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The Regional Council, which is the governing and chief policy-making body for the organization, is made up primarily of the mayors of all of the cities in the region, a representative of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, lead elected officials from the Indian Communities, and representatives of the Arizona Department of Transportation and the Citizens Transportation Oversight Committee.

THEN

The area around Pima and Shea was barren desert in 1974,



but it now is fully developed, including the new Pima Freeway.

NOW

Perhaps MAG's most significant achievement will soon be realized: the completion of the 144-mile Regional Freeway System in 2007. The impetus for the current freeway system was the funding of the Outer Loop, championed by elected officials in 1984. Those efforts led to the approval of the half-cent sales tax for transportation in 1985.

More recent achievements include the adoption of a Desert Spaces Plan to protect open space in the Valley; creation of a Domestic Violence Program to develop a coordinated community response to addressing domestic violence; implementation of the Freeway Service Patrol to help stranded motorists; and development of an Elderly Mobility Initiative to address future transportation needs of seniors. Additional milestones are included in the box to the right. 

MAJOR MAG MILESTONES

- 1967 Maricopa Association of Governments formed through concurrent resolutions from its member agencies to address regional problems.
- 1973 MAG is designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Maricopa region through the Federal Transportation Act.
- 1975 MAG is designated by the Governor as the Water Quality Planning Agency.
- 1978 MAG is designated by the Governor as the Lead Air Quality Planning Agency.
- 1978 Member agencies place responsibility for developing unified specifications and details for all public works projects with MAG.
- 1979 MAG is designated as the Solid Waste Planning Agency.
- 1982 MAG drafts its first plan to address carbon monoxide in the region.
- 1984 MAG drafts its first plan to address ozone pollution in the region.
- 1984 MAG forms the Outer Loop Financing Task Force to find financing alternatives for building the Outer Loop, Loop 101, also known as the Agua Fria and Pima Freeways.
- 1985 The MAG Regional Council recommends final elements of the freeway system for the vote for the one-half cent sales tax, which is overwhelmingly approved by voters three months later.
- 1985 Through MAG, the initial regional emergency 9-1-1 system is implemented. For the first time, Valley citizens no longer have to dial police departments directly.
- 1990 To meet new requirements of the Clean Air Act, MAG begins running all transportation projects through air quality models to ensure that transportation plans or projects do not contribute to air quality violations.
- 1991 The MAG region is designated under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act as a Transportation Management Area.
- 1992 The MAG Regional Council votes to allow 50 percent of MAG federal funds for local projects to be allocated for the completion of the MAG Freeway Program.
- 1992 MAG is granted authority under House Bill 2278 to approve any changes in freeway priorities and to approve material cost changes to the Regional Freeway Program. Since these changes to the law, the Regional Freeway Program has been on schedule and within budget.
- 1998 MAG launches the Desert Peaks Awards to recognize regional excellence.
- 1998 MAG spearheads an effort for the region to receive its fair share of federal transportation dollars. The increased funding leads MAG to initiate a plan to accelerate construction of the regional freeway system. This means the system will be delivered by 2007, seven years earlier than planned.
- 1998 The MAG Desert Spaces Plan is completed to protect open spaces that are in the path of development.
- 2000 MAG furthers its efforts to combat homelessness by creating a year-round planning body. The unified regional effort results in the highest funding ever awarded in homeless housing and services projects—a record \$18.6 million.
- 2000 MAG creates a Domestic Violence Council to develop a coordinated community response to addressing domestic violence in the region.
- 2001 MAG approves \$750,000 for the launch of the Freeway Service Patrol program to help stranded motorists and improve system mobility.
- 2001 MAG implements an elderly mobility initiative to look at transportation challenges caused by an aging population.
- 2002 Under MAG's leadership, the region marks five years without any violations of the standards for both carbon monoxide and ozone.
- 2002 The last section of the Loop 101 Freeway is opened, completing a 60-mile freeway loop around the Valley, and fulfilling the vision first promoted by elected officials in 1984.

MAG Launches New Web Site

Users accessing the Maricopa Association of Governments Web site will find it's gotten a lot more friendly.

The new MAG Web site went online in early May after months of construction. The new site has its own new Web server and features an improved navigation system, new search capabilities, feedback pages, calendar listings, news and events, and updated member, committee and project pages.

"The new site is designed to be easier and much more flexible for people to use," said MAG Graphics Specialist Gordon Tyus, who worked with a Web application development company in

designing the site. "Instead of using frames, each page on the site has a unique URL, so users can bookmark a favorite committee or project page and even e-mail the page to a friend," he said. "The new search engine function can search the entire site, including Adobe PDF files and other Web documents, as well as those that have been archived within the system," he added.

Another advantage of the site is that information can be found through many different paths, and the site map is automatically updated when new information is added. "Project managers will have the ability to specify which events, publications, and links are attached to their project

page," said Tyus. "Each page will provide an opportunity for questions and feedback, and the site will also support the posting of polls and surveys. When a project manager updates an event, the new information is automatically updated in the master calendar, as well as on any other pages to which the event is assigned," he said.

The site includes detailed information on the MAG Regional Council and other committees, as well as links to all member agencies. A newly-created "Get Involved" section encourages users to provide input into the decision-making process, and provides information on how citizens can get involved with MAG.

Future capabilities of the site will include an e-commerce function to allow for the sale of MAG documents online, as well as a GIS (Geographic Information Systems) component that will feature interactive maps and detailed databases.

"We are very excited about the enhanced capabilities of the new MAG Web site, and we hope those who log on are equally pleased with the user-friendliness and functionality of the site," said MAG Communications Manager Kelly Taft. "This is just one more way MAG is working to provide the ultimate access to our process and meet the needs of citizens and our member agencies," she said.

One thing hasn't changed: the new site can be found at the same old Web address at www.mag.maricopa.gov.



Forum Examines Safety Issues

Making the region's transportation system safer was the focus of the Second Annual Regional Transportation Safety Forum March 14, 2002.

The forum was cosponsored by the Maricopa Association of Governments, the Arizona Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers, and the International Municipal Signal Association. It included presentations on national transportation safety activities and on safety planning activities in the MAG region.

The forum included a special panel discussion on school transportation safety, featuring the perspectives of traffic engineers, police officers, emergency medical service agencies, the Arizona Automobile Association (AAA), school officials, and a city attorney.

"Formally and informally, the entire Safety Forum was abuzz with people focusing on solutions for community transportation safety issues – it was stimulating," said Jeanie McKenzie-LaVelle, a panelist and traffic safety education program manager for the City of Glendale.

Every year, more than 40,000 people die and another three million are injured in motor vehicle accidents. In November, the MAG Transportation Safety Stakeholders Group formed three safety teams to look at a variety of safety issues including roadway, pedestrian and bicycle safety as well as issues of enforcement, education and emergency response.

Once the teams have finished assessing needs and defining goals and strategies, action plans will be developed and incorporated into the development of MAG's new Regional Transportation Plan.



Jeanie McKenzie-LaVelle talks about safety education during a panel discussion.

MAG to Host Fifth Annual Desert Peaks Awards

The Maricopa Association of Governments will once again recognize accomplishments in regional cooperation by honoring individuals, projects and partnerships that have demonstrated a commitment to regionalism.

The fifth annual Desert Peaks Awards will be held June 26 at the Phoenix Airport Marriott, 1101 N. 44th Street, in Phoenix. A reception will begin at 5:30 p.m., followed by the dinner and awards program at 6:30 p.m. The dinner will include the State of the Region address, given by MAG Regional Council Chair Skip Rimsza, and a preview of what may be ahead by the incoming chair, who will be officially elected during the Regional Council Annual Meeting just prior to the event.

The Desert Peaks Awards honor regional efforts in five categories, including Public Partnership, Public-Private Partnership, Professional Service, Regional Partnership and Regional Excellence.

The Professional Service category (replacing Distinguished Service) is a newly defined category this year. It was established to reduce confusion with the other individual award category, Regional Excellence. The Professional Service category will recognize the individual staff member from any organization who has significantly contributed to regionalism through sustained or outstanding professional efforts, such as involvement with a MAG committee or program.

Entries are judged on a variety of factors, including the success of the individual or partnership in "promoting, recognizing, demonstrating, and attaining the ideals of regionalism."

"Our member agencies work cooperatively all year long to provide the services available in this region that make the Valley the great place it is," said MAG Executive Director James M. Bourey. "This is our chance to say we appreciate those efforts and we recognize that it is through this cooperation that we all enjoy a better quality of life," he said.

A prestigious panel of judges has been appointed to select the finalists and will meet May 17. Finalists will be notified the following week. Recipients will be announced during the event June 26.

The judging panel includes Barbara Barrett, Chairman of the Board, Valley Bank of Arizona; Representative Dean Cooley, District 21, State of Arizona; Fred Gaskin, Chancellor, Maricopa County Community Colleges; Mary Lynn Kasunic, Executive Director, Area Agency on Aging and former Desert Peaks recipient; Elaine Maimon, Provost, Arizona State University West; Dennis Mitchem; Director of Corporate Relations, Northern Arizona University; Judy Mohraz, President/CEO, Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust; and Leland Peterson, President and CEO, Sun Health Service. 

National Conference on Aging & Mobility *Highlights*

One of the single greatest transportation challenges in the 21st century may be addressing the needs of aging baby boomers.



National Conference on Aging & Mobility

Responding to the challenges caused by this coming “age wave” was the focus of a National Conference on Aging & Mobility: *Senior Mobility in the 21st Century – What Can We Do to Prepare?* The conference, hosted by the Maricopa Association of Governments in late March, attracted more than 200 participants from around the world, with speakers coming from as far away as Auckland, New Zealand; Victoria, Australia; and Hampshire, England.

The conference was organized with the recognition that the transportation challenges associated with an aging population are common concerns for communities across the nation. Sessions covered diverse subjects in the areas of transportation planning and project design, land use, alternative transportation modes, and older driver competency.

“Planners must prepare for a population where at least one in five – possibly even one in four – people will be over the age of 60,” said MAG Executive Director James M. Bourey in summing up lessons learned at the conference. “We have identified four key areas of concern: infrastructure and land use; alternative

modes of transportation; driver competency; and education and training.”

Keynote Speaker Dr. Joseph Coughlin, director of the MIT Age Lab, said it’s tough to get seniors out of their cars.

“The number one choice for getting around is driving. But it is not always convenient or safe,” he said. Dr. Coughlin said most seniors eventually find themselves limiting their own driving, when they no longer feel safe or comfortable.

“They don’t drive at night, in poor weather, at peak hours, or when roads are congested. That rules out a lot of driving time and limits their ability to go where they want, when they want.”

Dr. Coughlin said that the end of the ability to drive often signals the beginning of a spiral downward into isolation and depression for seniors. Yet, he says, too often states are concentrating on

issues such as older driving testing and forcing seniors out of their cars.

“Ironically, the older driver debate has contributed little to mobility,” he said. “Most of the focus is on debating ‘how old is too old?’ or on vision tests – who to test, what tests work best. A better question would be: Is there an option at the other end?” he said.

Issues examined during the conference included public



Keynote Speaker
Dr. Joseph Coughlin

Upcoming Challenges



March 25-27, 2002

transportation, driver education, and the need for better paratransit services, such as small neighborhood vehicles that are available on demand. Other potential solutions included the building of “intelligent” cars that help seniors navigate or see better at night; improving signage and pedestrian facilities; designing ‘livable communities’ in which amenities are within walking or biking distance; coordinating transportation services among a host of agencies;

architect Jim Coffman.

Another session focused on aviation and the challenges faced by seniors when accessing airports for their travel.

The Maricopa Association of Governments has already developed 25 recommendations to address senior transportation needs. During a final session at the conference, participants identified a number of next steps that need to be accomplished.

and educating seniors about possible options.

One session at the conference was a mobile workshop in which participants walked through nearby neighborhoods to see some of the challenges for themselves. Disappearing and meandering sidewalks, curb cuts that led into traffic, poorly designed handicap ramps, unshaded transit stops, and confusing signage were just a few of the problems pointed out by landscape

They included getting specific language and funding directed toward aging and mobility issues as part of the upcoming reauthorization of federal transportation law; broadening partnerships with public health and other agencies; getting national leaders engaged; improving education on the issues to all affected communities; encouraging local agencies to address paratransit improvements; pushing for a presidential executive order on senior mobility; and holding future national conferences to keep the dialogue going.

There is no single solution – no ‘silver bullet’ – to address the challenges ahead...our response will need to be diverse and flexible.

“Probably the most important outcome of the conference is the recognition that there is no single solution – no ‘silver bullet’ – to address the challenges ahead,” said MAG Human Services Program Manager Suzanne Quigley. “The needs of seniors vary greatly, and our response will need to be diverse and flexible. As aging motorists lose their ability to drive, the demand for services will increase exponentially,” she said. Strategies will require the cooperation of not only local, regional and state governments, but also industry, friends and families, and individual seniors themselves, she added. 



Final Segment of Loop 101 Completed

MAG Played Key Role in Development of Outer Loop

With the snip of the scissors through a red ribbon, the completion of the Loop 101 was officially recognized during a dedication ceremony April 6, 2002.

The opening of the segment between Scottsdale Road and Princess Drive marked the last remaining leg of the Loop 101, also known as the "Outer Loop" and the Pima and Agua Fria Freeways. The loop makes a 60-mile circuit around the Valley, connecting western, eastern, northern, and southern areas of the region.

During the dedication ceremony, Roc Arnett, chairman of the Citizens Transportation Oversight Committee and former member of the State Transportation Board, said the construction of the loop was a collaborative effort involving the entire region.

"There were many, many hands in making this Loop 101 come together and now be completed,

stated Arnett. "It starts with the cities on the far southeast side of Chandler; obviously Tempe, Mesa, and the Salt River Indian Community to the east; Scottsdale and Phoenix to the north; and Peoria, Glendale and the cities of the West Valley have all worked very, very hard to make this come together."

But the opening wouldn't have been possible, said Arnett, without the work of MAG that began nearly two decades ago.

"The unsung heroes in the background are those of the MAG staff, that nobody says too much about but are nonetheless there and spent a lot of time and effort helping make this thing take place," he said. "And frankly, this has been a labor of almost 20 years now since this deal started," he added.

It was in July of 1984 that the Regional Council, chaired by Mayor George Renner of Glendale, first began exploring how to fund the regional freeway system. The Council formed the Outer Loop Financing Task Force to find financing alternatives for building the loop. The members of the Task Force included Vice Mayor Billie Gentry from the City of Scottsdale, who served as chair; Mayor Chauncey Coor from the City of Goodyear; Supervisor Tom Freestone from Maricopa County; Supervisor Fred Koory, also of Maricopa County; and Mayor Terry Goddard from the City of Phoenix.

In September of 1984, the Regional Council approved the recommendation of the Task



Governor Jane Dee Hull

Force to proceed with financing the construction through the use of county bonds. One month later, in meetings with representatives from the Phoenix Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, it was proposed that a half-cent sales tax for transportation be used to build the entire freeway system.

There followed a flurry of activity as the MAG Regional Council initiated a series of studies, including the East Valley Transportation Analysis, Central Area Transportation Analysis, and West Area Transportation Analysis. These studies identified the elements of the freeway system that the Regional Council subsequently approved adding to the Regional Freeway Plan.

In the 1985 Legislative Session, authority was provided to request the voters to approve a one-half cent sales tax for transportation facilities as described in the MAG Plan.

Proposition 300 was overwhelmingly approved by the voters on

Loop 101 continued on page 9

The MAG tent was a popular place, especially when it started to rain.



Public Hearing, Special Events Provide Opportunities for Input

Valley residents were provided with five opportunities to tell transportation planners what they think about state and regional transportation plans – during a series of public events sponsored by the Maricopa Association of Governments.

The opportunities were part of MAG's "mid-phase" public involvement process to provide citizens with the opportunity to comment on the initial plan analysis for the Draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Draft Long Range Transportation Plan. The documents are used to guide transportation investments in the region for the next five years and the next twenty years, respectively.

The first opportunity for input during the designated mid-phase process was a "MAG at the Mall" event at the Arizona Mills Mall in Tempe on March 2, 2002. The second opportunity came during a Transportation Fair held at the Central Station Transit Center on March 21.

The most significant opportunity for input was a Joint Agency Open House and Public Hearing on April 5, 2002. The open house allowed citizens to view displays and documents before the public hearing. The hearing was held before the members of the State Transportation Board and representatives of the MAG Regional Council, Valley Metro, Citizens Transportation Oversight Committee and MAG Transportation Review Committee. The meeting

began with presentations by MAG and the Arizona Department of Transportation about the plans, after which public comment was taken. A court reporter was in attendance to record the comments.

On April 6, MAG staffed a booth at the Loop 101 Freeway Opening. MAG staff spoke with residents about the organization's role as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization and answered questions about its plans and programs.

Finally, on April 14, MAG hosted a booth at the "Sunday on Central" community event in Phoenix. Hundreds of people stopped by the MAG booth to learn more about transportation issues and to have fun playing the MAG trivia game.

Comments taken during the events, as well as written and verbal comments received during the Mid-Phase Input Opportunity, are contained in the FY 2002 Mid-Phase Input Opportunity Report, along with formal responses to the comments. The report is available by request or via the MAG Web site. 


Loop 101 Completed

(Continued from page 8)

October 8, 1985, by nearly a three-to-one majority (72 percent) in favor of the proposition. On January 29, 1986, the Regional Council unanimously approved the priorities for the Freeway System, which have served as the foundation for implementing the program.

"So it wasn't just the Outer Loop that was born during those efforts," said MAG Assistant Director Dennis Smith, who's been with MAG for 25 years. "It was the entire regional freeway system."

Since that time, MAG member agencies have continued to support the system, with local governments pledging \$700 million of MAG federal funds – funds which could have been used on local projects – to ensure the completion of the Regional Freeway System.

With the system expected to be completed by 2007, many have asked what lies ahead. MAG is currently working on a new Regional Transportation Plan to provide the blueprint for the next 20 to 40 years for transportation investments in the region. 

MAG Moment



State Transportation Board Chair Katie Dusenberry uses a deflated MAG beach ball to keep the rain off during Loop 101 dedication ceremonies.

Tours Give Insight Into Study Areas

Elected city and county officials, transportation planners, and the media were given the opportunity to participate in tours of three rapidly developing areas in the Valley, to see firsthand how population growth and development may impact future transportation needs.



Mayor Wendy Feldman-Kerr points out new development in Queen Creek.

The tours were part of three separate subregional studies that MAG is undertaking to identify specific conditions and concerns in each subregion. The identified needs and supporting background information from the studies will help guide future transportation planning for the area. The studies include the Northwest Area, Southwest Area, and Southeast Maricopa/Northern Pinal County Area.



The first tour was conducted on Tuesday, March 18 as part of the Southeast Maricopa/Northern Pinal County

Area Transportation Study, which is being conducted jointly by MAG and the Central Arizona Association of Governments with support from the Arizona Department of Transportation. The tour took participants through rapidly developing areas in Apache Junction, Queen Creek, Mesa, Gilbert, and Northern Pinal County.


"It's one thing to look at charts and bar graphs that show where growth is occurring, it's another to go out and see the rooftops and road conditions for yourself," said Mayor Wendy Feldman-Kerr, who helped guide a portion of the tour through her town of Queen Creek. "It's that visual picture that hits you and makes you recognize the importance of planning," she said.

The tour provided an opportunity for elected officials and others to see developing areas firsthand, as well as identify and discuss common transportation issues and possible solutions.

The Southeast Maricopa/Northern Pinal County Area Transportation Study tour gave

participants the opportunity to examine and discuss a variety of transportation issues in the Southeast Valley, such as capacity on US 60 and State Route 79, impacts of truck traffic, rural transit issues, a potential east/west reliever route, freeway access, Williams Gateway Airport impacts, and more.

Tours were also held in the Northwest and Southwest Areas in early May. The Northwest Area Study tour focused on issues that included freeway/expressway capacity, arterial street continuity, transit, truck traffic, corridor preservation, Luke Air Force Base, Loop 303, Grand Avenue and east-west capacity. The Southwest Area tour focused on many of the same issues, with additional discussions on the South Mountain/Loop 202 corridor and rail.

Each study will identify travel characteristics and patterns and recommend transportation options to meet the needs of travelers in each subregion. The studies are expected to be completed in the fall of 2002. 



Look Who's Talking:

MAG Completes Regional Videoconferencing System

Beam us up, Scotty! The MAG Regional Videoconferencing System is now complete. The system includes 30 videoconferencing sites: including one at each of the 27 cities, towns and Indian communities in Maricopa County, plus three videoconference meeting rooms located at the MAG offices, the hub site for the system.

The final site to go online with the system was the Town of Wickenburg, with system acceptance completed in April after a series of technical challenges. Once installed, it didn't take long for town officials to start utilizing the system – within just a few days Mayor Lon McDermott was using the videoconferencing equipment to attend an aviation meeting.

The implementation of the MAG Regional Videoconferencing System is the culmination of three years of planning and preparation by MAG and its member agencies – with primary support coming from the MAG Telecommunications Advisory Group (MAGTAG). The main purpose of the system is to reduce travel throughout the region, thereby alleviating traffic congestion and improving air quality. The system was funded by the Federal Highway Administration as a demonstration project for other communities.

"It makes an awful lot of sense from an air quality and traffic congestion perspective," said Wickenburg Town Manager Fred

Carpenter, who notes there are many MAG meetings officials and staff can now attend without making the 107-mile round trip to downtown Phoenix.

According to MAGTAG Chairman Jim Hull, videoconferencing also saves time, improves meeting attendance and participation, and extends outreach to citizens who may not otherwise be able to attend MAG meetings.

"Videoconferencing was recognized as a high priority by the Regional Council," said Hull. "MAGTAG saw that it provided potential benefits in reducing both travel and the associated emissions. Since then there has also been a lot of benefit in allowing more people to attend meetings remotely, where maybe only one could travel to the meeting previously."

Hull said the system has gotten even more use since the events of September 11, as companies reduced travel as well as budgets.

"Since September 11 there has also been an added security, safety, and convenience factor to videoconferencing," said Hull.


Wickenburg isn't the only city to avidly embrace the system. Chandler, Fountain Hills, Phoenix, and Surprise have all used the videoconferencing system numerous times, attending such meetings as the Regional Aviation System Policy Committee, Telecommunications Advisory Group, Building Codes Committee, Streets Committee, and Domestic



Violence Council, all of which have reduced regional vehicle trips. Cities have also used the system to interview prospective job candidates from as far away as Canada and Sweden. A number of these applicants have been hired, saving the city and the applicant thousands of dollars in potential travel costs. The system has also been used to foster relations with other jurisdictions and beyond, such as in January when the City of Phoenix Sister Cities Commission held a point-to-point videoconference between Phoenix and Ireland.

Maricopa County used its MAG-supplied videoconferencing unit for witness testimony in an Oregon Grand Jury trial. Five witnesses from across Arizona came to the Maricopa County videoconference room to testify.

Each videoconferencing location has a designated site coordinator who has been trained to use the equipment. MAG is also launching a videoconferencing training course for new site coordinators and interested staff.

Marketing initiatives for the system are well underway with demonstrations given to nearly all MAG committees and at several city staff meetings. A press conference announcing the launch of the system is planned for late May, 2002. 



Jim Hull, Chair of the MAG Telecommunications Advisory Group

EVENTS *Calendar*

MEETING *Times*

SUMMER 2002

May	June	July
1st 1:30 PM, Standard Specifications and Details Committee 2nd 10:00 AM, Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee 8th 12:00 PM, Management Committee 9th 2:00 PM, Domestic Violence Council 14th 1:30 PM, Street Committee 15th 10:00 AM, Regional Council Transportation Subcommittee 15th 2:00 PM, Building Codes Committee 16th 1:00 PM, Human Services Technical Advisory Committee 21st 10:00 AM, Transportation Review Committee 21st 10:00 AM, Population Technical Advisory Committee 21st 1:30 PM, Pedestrian Working Group 22nd 5:00 PM, Regional Council 23rd 10:00 AM, Telecommunications Advisory Group 23rd 1:30 PM, High Capacity Transit Working Group 23rd 1:30 PM, Homeless Continuum of Care Steering Committee 28th 10:00 AM, Elderly Mobility Stakeholders Group 29th 1:30 PM, Enhancement Funds Working Group 30th 1:30 PM, Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee	5th 10:00 AM, Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee 5th 1:30 PM, Standard Specifications and Details Committee 10th 1:30 PM, Enhancement Funds Working Group 11th 1:30 PM, Street Committee 12th 12:00 PM, Management Committee 18th 10:00 AM, Population Technical Advisory Committee 18th 1:30 PM, Bicycle Task Force 19th 10:00 AM, Regional Council Transportation Subcommittee 19th 2:00 PM, Building Codes Committee 20th 1:00 PM, Human Services Technical Advisory Committee 24th 1:30 PM, Enhancement Funds Working Group (tentative) 25th 10:00 AM, Transportation Review Committee 26th 5:00 PM, Regional Council Annual Meeting 26th 5:30 PM, 2002 Desert Peaks Awards Evening at the Phoenix Airport Marriott Hotel 27th 10:00 AM, Telecommunications Advisory Group 27th 1:30 PM, Homeless Continuum of Care Steering Committee	1st 1:30 PM, Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee 3rd 10:00 AM, Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee 3rd 1:30 PM, Standard Specifications and Details Committee 9th 1:30 PM, Street Committee 10th 12:00 PM, Management Committee 16th 10:00 AM, Population Technical Advisory Committee 16th 1:30 PM, Pedestrian Working Group 17th 10:00 AM, Regional Council Transportation Subcommittee 17th 2:00 PM, Building Codes Committee 18th 10:00 AM, Human Services Technical Advisory Committee and Human Services Coordinating Committee Joint Meeting 23rd 10:00 AM, Transportation Review Committee 24th 5:00 PM, Regional Council 25th 10:00 AM, Telecommunications Advisory Group 25th 1:30 PM, Homeless Continuum of Care Steering Committee 25th 1:30 PM, High Capacity Transit Working Group 30th 10:00 AM, Elderly Mobility Stakeholders Group
All meetings, unless indicated otherwise, will be held in the conference rooms located in the MAG offices on the second floor of the Compass Bank Building, 302 N. 1st Avenue.	Parking is available under the building. Please ask for parking validation at the meeting. Bus fares may be reimbursed with a valid transfer. Bike racks are available at the entrance to the parking garage.	The dates, times and locations of all meetings may change. Other committees not listed here may meet during these months. Please call (602) 254-6300 for confirmation.


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